

# Older hoopster's league scores big

By Lee Brown  
Sentinel-Voice

Las Vegas enjoys a wide variety of basketball leagues catering to many age groups and skill levels.

One such league gives older athletes - willing to strap on that knee brace and lace up those year-old Jordans - a chance to relive past glory. The league's founder boasts that it's got the most talent in the city.

"It is currently the most competitive basketball league in Las Vegas," said Ron Williams, league organizer and founder of the Foundation for Health in Sports. "Ninety-five percent of the ball players in the league right now are local guys. Ex-UNLV ballplayers and current UNLV ballplayers - all the big names."

Now in its second season, the "Summer Shoot The Rock" adult basketball league has just hit its mid-way point.

Developed by the Foundation for Health in Sports and hosted by the Community College of Southern Nevada, the league sports past and present college standouts and former National Basketball Association (NBA) players.

Shoot the Rock, the foundation's first venture, is the only local basketball league authorized by college athletics' governing body, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, Williams said.

The league boasts more than 156 players, with 13, 12-member teams.

And despite the age of some, a short list of those playing is impressive. They include Robert Smith and "Sudden" Sam Smith who played for the



Williams founded the Shoot The Rock adult hoops league.

legendary Runnin' Rebel teams of the late 1970s (both went on to play in the NBA). Other former Rebels include Michael "Spiderman" Burns, John Flowers and Anthony Todd.

Also playing are current Rebels Tyrone Nesby, UNLV's leading scorer last season; shot-blocking and hard-dunking Keon Clark, seen by many as a top NBA prospect next year; and highly-touted Rebel newcomer Edwin "Greedy" Daniels.

Teams pay a \$350 registration fee but admission is free for the games - played Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, under NCAA rules, including a 25-second shot clock. All other local leagues are played under high school rules, Williams said.

"This is our second season," said Williams, who turns a young 40 next week. "We started the first league in January and we have plans to run the league three times a year."

"Next season, I'm going to have a "Shoot the Rock"

basketball league which will use college rules, he said. "I'm also going to have a 'Shoot the Rock Pro' league, which will use all professional basketball rules - 24-second shot clock, man-to-man defense (no zone defense)," said Williams, who is an NCAA Division II and III referee. Presently, he is in charge of assigning referees for the Las Vegas Invitational Tournament.

Williams also oversees the officials for the Doolittle Church and Late Night Hoops leagues, played at the Doolittle Community Center and Chuck Minker Sports Complex, respectively. He says that the majority of the referees that work with him locally are college officials.

"Most referees have those types of assignments," Williams said. "It's kind of painstaking, but I love doing it. So, it's something I'm going

to do for the rest of my life. I'm going to be involved in officiating in some capacity, and running leagues the rest of my life." A native of Chicago, Williams landed in Las Vegas after an uncle won the lottery and brought him here on vacation. He liked it so much, he decided to move here four years ago.

"I have been refereeing for 16 years now," he said. "Basically, I use the concepts that are used back East, as far as the way I run the league."

As for the newly-formed organization, "It's a sports foundation - a foundation whose idea I picked up from a friend of mine who has a similar thing in Chicago," Williams said. "He runs all the high school programs for the kids during the summer there."

Williams has big plans for the league. "Somewhere down the line we want to put grants together for kids to go to school, and things like that," he said.

So far, people have been supportive. "Everyone I come in contact with does want to help," he said. "We have a lot of sponsorships."

Williams urges anyone interested in future Shoot the Rock basketball leagues, or aiding the Foundation for Health in Sports to call him at 648-8400.

"We need a developmental thing (locally) as far as teaching the young players the pro rules and pro mechanics, and what's going on as far as the pro game is concerned."

## Ramblin'

(Continued from Page 1)

program via parent or friend referral. A few are recruited from the State of Nevada Youth Parole System and the Metro Police Youth Diversion Program.

Cultural, academic and life enhancement are key program components.

The Ramblin' Rec also visits community centers, schools and participates in social events. Youth get academic reinforcement, and the assistants receive twice weekly tutoring.

Watts emphasizes bringing neighborhood heroes to the children. Former Las Vegas City Councilman Frank Hawkins, former NFL star Carl Banks and Oakland Raiders running back Napoleon Kaufman have all shared their experiences.

The staff also caters to the children's emotional needs. "We are tutors, counselors, confidantes and friends," DeSantis said.



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## SPORTS BRIEFS

### UNITED STATES SWEEPS 100-METERS; ROCK MISSES CUT

Maurice Greene and Marion Jones won the men's and women's in the 100m finals at the World Track & Field Championships last weekend in Athens, Greece. With their gold medals, they earned the unofficial titles of "world fastest man and woman." Greene, 23, ran a 9.86, just .02 off the world record held by Canada's Donovan Bailey, who finished second with 9.91. American Tim Montgomery finished third at 9.94. Jones, 21, narrowly defeated Zhanna Pintushevich in the women's race. She ran a 10.83; the Ukrainian clocked a 10.85. Greene also restored U.S. dominance in the mens' race, breaking a streak that saw America winless at the last four major meets, and shut out of medals at the '95 World Championships and the '96 Olympics. The World Championships ended early for Las Vegas native Brandon Rock. He failed to qualify for the semifinals in the 800-meter run Tuesday. Rock, a former Eldorado graduate, took sixth in his heat with a time of 1 minute, 47.13 seconds.

### SEATTLE CLOSES DEALS WITH 1ST ROUND PICKS

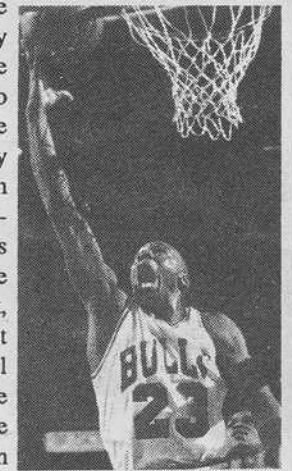
Cornerback Shawn Springs and tackle Walter Jones ended their 18-day holdout last weekend and started practicing Monday. Springs, the No. 3 overall pick from Ohio State, signed a seven-year, \$20 million with a \$6 million signing bonus. Jones, the No. 6 overall pick from Florida State, got six-year, \$12 million deal with a \$4 million bonus. Both players were on the sidelines during Seattle's preseason victory against Arizona 34-6. "I feel part of the team now," said Springs, who is expected to be the starting left cornerback. "I'm thinking about my first practice. I don't want to embarrass myself out there." "It'll be tough making up for lost time in training camp, but I'm looking forward to it" said Jones, who is projected to start at left tackle.

### IVERSON TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY TO DRUG CHARGE

Philadelphia 76ers guard Allen Iverson said he will plead innocent to a drug charge after a weekend incident in which Virginia state police found two marijuana cigarettes in his car. Iverson was a passenger in a car that was stopped early Sunday morning for speeding on Interstate 64 near Richmond, Va. The car, a Mercedes-Benz owned by Iverson, was going 93 mph in a 65-mph zone. The state trooper who stopped the car smelled marijuana. A search of the car revealed a .45 caliber pistol belonging to Iverson and two marijuana cigarettes in the car. Iverson was charged with possession of marijuana, a misdemeanor. A charge of possession of firearms with a controlled substance will be dropped because it applies only if found with a pound or more of marijuana is found with the weapon, state police said.

### NEWS AND NOTES FROM AROUND THE NBA

Michael Jordan settled a lawsuit he filed against Avon Products Inc., after he accused the cosmetics company and a watch distributor of using his name and picture in a Father's Day sales promotion without his permission. Jordan sued Avon and M.Z. Berger & Co. for \$100 million for using unauthorized photos of Jordan and his signature to promote watches and other merchandise for its Father's Day catalog....Shawn Kemp says he is moving back to Indiana and no longer wants to talk with Seattle SuperSonics owner Barry Ackerley. In an interview in Saturday's Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Kemp said he is selling his house and will move into his mother's home in Elkhart, Ind., where he grew up. "I just came back to make the final arrangements," he said. "More than likely, this is the last time I'll be here."....Atlanta coach Lenny Wilkens, the winningest coach in National Basketball Association history, has reportedly been offered a four year contract, Atlanta station WXIA-TV reported. The Hawks would not confirm the report. Wilkens, 59, who coached the Hawks last season to a 56 -26 record has a year left on his five-year contract, reported to be worth \$6 million to \$7 million.



MICHAEL JORDAN

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Sentinel-Voice staff writer

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